

MARXIST REVOLUTIONARY THEORY
AND
PRACTICE

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progressive and bourgeois parties while other communist parties such as Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI(ML)), Unity Centre for Communist Revolutionaries of India (Marxist-Leninist) (UCCRI (ML)), and Central Organising Committee (COC) are either boycotting parliamentary elections totally or intending to use them in a limited way so as to serve the long run purpose of revolution. The need for a full analysis of this issue, both from theoretical and practical angles is of utmost concern to all those interested in the study of communist parties and their understanding of the political system. However, I will discuss the issues of parliamentarism, forming alliances participating in and forming governments at regional and national levels not in isolation but all in relation to the general theory and strategy in the Marxist Revolutionary Praxis.

In this paper I propose to discuss the issue in the light of the theoretical position taken by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky, Gramsci and Mao in regard to political ideas and institutions at different stages in history and the role of these ideas and institutions - particularly bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliaments - in advancing the revolutionary cause. In analysing the issues I will take into account the specific circumstances and the national and international contexts in which the parties in question are situated.⁵

The paper discusses the classical Marxist perspective on the origin of political ideas and institutions, and the role they play in social development and social revolution and how these ideas and institutions are used for reactionary, reformatory and revolutionary purposes.

Parliamentarism, as used in this paper, means utilisation of, or participation in, parliamentary institutions at national, regional and local levels for seeking power or propagating party programmes and educating the people on one's party line. Parliamentarism which played a progressive role in consolidating the bourgeois revolutions and advancing the bourgeois democratic cause through representative institutions is considered to have a reactionary role in keeping the bourgeoisie in power in the wake of the emergence of the proletarian class. Whereas the bourgeoisie uses the parliamentary institutions to cover and defend its class interests against the onslaught of the proletariat and for continuing its dominance, the proletariat uses these institutions as one of its various means of class struggles to establish 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' for extending democratic rights to, and bringing about social emancipation of the masses. Proletarian participation in parliaments has to be distinguished from the parliamentarism of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat considers parliamentarism as one of the means of enlightening and educating the proletariat and organizing it into an independent proletarian party in its political struggle against the bourgeoisie for the ulti-

mate conquest of power. Thus the working class not only saves the bourgeois parliamentarism from the bourgeoisie but also propagates its mission and promotes its revolutionary cause by way of participating in these institutions.

The Marxist attitude to bourgeois parliaments has to be understood in relation to their concept of the origin of the state, political ideas and institutions.

True to their materialist world outlook society is conceived by Marxists as having originated out of the material needs of human beings to produce and enter into certain relations of production. While forces of production determine the relations of production social ideas and institutions correspond to the relations of production or what may otherwise be called the economic system. The secret of the hidden basis of the whole construction of society is seen by them in the relation between the owners of the conditions of production and the immediate producers.

It is not that social, political and legal ideas and institutions correspond directly to the level of development of forces of production as some of the adherents of economic determinism believed. They failed to appreciate that the development of the productive forces is 'reflected in ideology not directly but indirectly through the refraction of these changes in the economic basis'.⁶ The ideas and institutions of the people depend upon the level of social development and the stage of economic development.

MARXIAN PROBLEMATIC OF BASE-SUPERSTRUCTURE RELATION

For Marxists social development takes place in a dialectical way i.e. in terms of unity and contradiction. Everything changes or moves because of inherent contradictions in it. Contradictions, union and conflict of opposites, prevails in the material social world and is reflected in human consciousness. At the same time the Marxist understanding of political ideas and institutions in terms of their role in society has to be placed in the context of stage of development of the objective material conditions in different countries. Parliamentary institutions in England may not play the same role as in India or in any other country at present. In the same manner dialectical thinking regards things and phenomena in terms of their internal unity and contradiction which gives them constant motion and dialectical development. Contradictions in the economic conditions at a certain moment of development are reflected in the dialectics of political ideas and institutions. Thus capitalism and capitalist democracy at a particular moment may be both progressive and reactionary. In relation to feudalism and monarchic institutions they are progressive; in relation to proletarian democracy and institutions they are reactionary.⁷ Yet some Marxists tend to view different bourgeois regimes in a mechanistic way without making any qualitative differentiation. I will discuss later what consequences this has for the analysis of different bourgeois regimes and pre-capitalist social formations seeing them as 'sunk in the same bloody morass

of military bureaucratic institutions'.

Having been formed as a product of material conditions of social life ideas and institutions play an active role, and in certain cases they even modify the material conditions of life i.e., the substructure. In the process of this interaction the limitation, however, is that the sub-structure determines the nature of the active role of the ideas and institutions in the ultimate analysis.⁸ Here comes the question of distinguishing the origin of ideas and institutions from the question of their active role in social change and at the same time the nature of the active role. The relation between social development, ideas and institutions that support the old and obsolete material conditions of life and those new ones pointing to a radical change have to be distinguished while keeping in mind the dialectical relation between them.

Applying this abstract logic to concrete situations Plekhanov explained how social institutions pertaining to the super-structure considerably hindered the development of productive forces in France in the 18th century. Thus it was in their (i.e. obstructive and archaic social institutions) abolition that the whole meaning of the social movement in France of the period lay. Putting the issue in abstract terms Plekhanov says : 'since a whole super-structure of social relations, sentiments and concepts groups on the economic basis, that super-structure first fostering and then hindering the economic development, there arises between the super-structure and the

basis an interaction which provides the key to an understanding of all those phenomena which at first seem to contradict the fundamental thesis of historical materialism' (Plekhanov, vide Roy Chodhary, 1980 : 5).

However, it is economic determinism to say that views and institutions of the superstructure in a society are an automatic product of economy. It is necessary to take into account the conscious activities and struggles of men in their evolution. The conscious activities and struggles of the people which influence the formation of the ideas and institutions themselves 'depend on a variety of particular factors in a country's life including the character and traditions of its people, the personalities of its leading men'. As such the political and ideological factors that determine the peculiarities of the institutions cannot be studied by reference to some general laws but they have to be understood in the light of the historical context. The programme for a communist party can have meaning only when it is based on a critical analysis of the interaction between the ideological and political factors on the hand and the economic structure on the other.

Application of the Marxist base super-structure problematic to concrete situations in recent decades in various societies has varied from school to school. This has been more so in the case of revolutionary practice in countries of the 'Third World' in both kinds of situations : where revolution has succeeded and where struggles are still being waged.

However, this aspect of revolutionary practice has been a subject of controversy, a discussion of which is important for the purpose of this paper. The controversy is not about the basic proposition of base-superstructure relation. Rather, it is about the need to analyse the objective conditions and forms of struggle in various societies having a variety of institutions in terms of the imagery of the base-superstructure relation. Hindess doubts the applicability of such inadequate, abstract propositions, controversy about which is yet to be resolved, to the political forms of struggles in various contexts. He says that when we are "concerned with the forms and conditions of struggles in societies with parliamentary forms of government ... Political analysis conducted in terms of imagery of economic determination and struggle between classes must be fundamentally inadequate (Hindess, 1983 :4).

Carl Boggs also points out the inadequacies and dilemmas of classical Marxism. For him it is a strange paradox of Marxism that it should have given birth to a remarkably non-political and apolitical tradition which took various forms like 'economism and gradualism of Bernstein, the scientific materialism of Plekhanov, Kautsky and the Austro-Marxists, and spontaneism of Rosa Luxemburg. It was Lenin who through his conceptions of highly organised vanguard Party and 'Primacy of Politics', politicised Marxism' by redeeming politics from its long theoretical and practical submergence as a mere byproduct of the economic 'base' and raising it to the level of a positive

historical force, a creative mechanism of socialist revolution. Even people like Korsch, Lukacs, Marcuse and Marxist humanists like Sartre and Kolakowski who deviated most from orthodox Marxism and chose to explore new intellectual paths also rejected ultimately the political realm because of their pre-occupation with philosophical and cultural aspects of the super-structure.

Only one major Marxist who penetrated this theoretical impasse to 'broaden, democratise and enrich the strategy of socialist revolution' is Gramsci. Of all the contribution made by Gramsci to creative Marxism, two aspects relevant to the present discussion are : the role of ideological struggle in the revolutionary process as reflected in his concept of 'ideological hegemony; and the perspective of revolutionary change as a total and all embracing process which encompass all dimensions of human life, reflected in the concept of ensemble of relations that incorporated economics, politics, culture, social relations and ideology (Boggs, 1976 : 11-18; Miliband, 1977 : 48-49).

But C. Wright Mills, a familiar Marxist writer, strongly feels that such doubts about the 'theoretical vacancy', 'ambiguities' in Marxist theory on the relationship of base and superstructure (or economy on the one hand and ideas and institutions on the other) are unfounded. According to Mills there is no scope for such a qualification of economic determinism, with an interplay of various factors and vague sociological pluralism. Marx, according to Mills, has stated this unequivocally.

cally and it reflects in his work as a whole in particular "his theory of power, his conception of the state, his rather simple notions of class and his use of these notions (including the proletariat as the agency of history making)". Mills assumes with Engels that, "Marx allows a degree of 'free play among the several factors that interact', provides a flexible time-schedule in which economic causes do their work. But economic causes are the basic the ultimate, the general, the innovative causes of historical change" (Mills, 1963 : 92-93).

GRAMSCI AND THE THEORY OF SUPER-STRUCTURE

According to Mclellan, Gramsci has been called the theoretician of the superstructure who opposed all forms of economic determinism and laid emphasis on the importance of political and ideological aspects of social development. Gramsci considered this emphasis more important in the West because the cultural and ideological weapons at the disposal of the bourgeoisie were, at least initially, more important than reliance on pure force. He drew a sharp distinction between countries like Russia and the West (Mclellan, 1983 : 181). For Gramsci, 'in Russia the state was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relationship between state and civil society, and when the state trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The state was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earth works' (Gramsci, vide Mclellan, Ibid, 181-182). As Mclellan notes, this implied different revolutionary strategies in

East and West : 'In less developed societies the State should be the object of frontal attack; in more developed societies it should be civil society" (McLellan, Ibid : 182).

Another important aspect of Gramsci's philosophy which Sassoon has noted with deep concern is : Gramsci has argued against a spontaniest and economistic view of building socialism. Although Gramsci felt that no cultural reform is possible without an economic reform, which is a concrete mode in which every intellectual and moral reform presents itself, creation of new structures as an 'historical bloc' with the economic base cannot be left to a spontaneous sparadic occurrence. Sassoon further explains what Gramsci implied by the above argument : 'The hegemony of the current ruling class cannot be understood if it is considered simply from the point of view of legitimisation of the present social order, extracting it from a field of contending class forces'. He, therefore, disagrees, both with Ralph Miliband who depicts Gramsci's concept as a legitimisation mechanism in his The State in Capitalist Society (1969) and with Nicos Poulantzas who would reduce the concept to usage by the dominant classes in his Political Power and Social Classes (Sassoon, 1980 : 129-131 and 235).

Salamini interprets Gramsci's concept of ideological hegemony in the same manner. The type of revolution for Gramsci depends upon the historical conditions and 'these historical conditions are not structural but superstructural in character and consist in varying degrees of development of either the

civil society or the political society' (Salamini, 1981 : 61). Further, Salamini argues that the failure of revolutions in the West cannot be explained in terms of non-ripenness of objective economic conditions. In Western countries where the civil society is highly organised on the level of consciousness and wherein intellectuals and the leaders of subaltern classes have been absorbed into its orbit, the failure of revolutions has to be understood in terms of the failure to direct the ideological struggle against the civil society.

Salamini is impressed by a non-Leninist interpretation of Gramsci's hegemony by Tamburrano (1969) and Bobbio (1979). For Tamburrano, the distinctions between civil society and political society, hegemony and domination in Gramsci's thought are central : "The domination of, be it feudal or bourgeois, is the domination of a Weltanschauung which, diffused among the masses, generates a consensus on the norms and the institutions of that society. Likewise, the proletarian hegemony is the establishment of proletarian direction of a new historical bloc on the level of ideology and culture" (Salamini, 1981 : 135). Because of the privileged position given by Gramsci to civil society which is based on consensus it acquires primacy over political society which is based on coercion and domination. The conquest of power, above all, is attainment of hegemony through democratic consensus rather than the coercive apparatus of political society.

The same is spelt out in Bobbio's substantially non-Leninist interpretation of Gramsci. Elaborating Bobbio's focus on Gramsci's shift in the concept of hegemony from the sense of a political direction to that of both political and cultural direction, Salamini writes : "hegemony denotes a cultural direction, in the sense of intellectual and ethical reform of culture and society; as a consequence of the subordination of the political to the civil society, the moment of domination, free and coercion is subordinate to that of hegemony. In Lenin dictatorship and hegemony are equally important, but the first, the movement of force is decisive and primary in relation to that of consensus. While in Lenin, the conquest of power precedes that of hegemony, in Gramsci it is the hegemony which must precede the other. The notion of hegemony is more extensive and its functions more encompassing than that of Lenin. In fact, Bobbio argues the agent of hegemony in Gramsci is not the party only, as in Lenin, but all the institutions of the civil society in charge of the elaboration and diffusion of culture (Salamini, 1981 : 135).

According to Salamini, Gramsci also treats the problem of structure-superstructure relationship in relation to the concept of hegemony. Whereas Marx and Engels were more concerned with the origin of superstructure than with its impact on society and assigned a passive role to the superstructure, Gramsci was concerned with the analysis of the role of superstructure in the socialist revolution and socialist

transformation. In his scheme the relation between structure and superstructure is completely altered : in Marx the structure is primary and determining factors; in Gramsci, it is superstructure which is primary and determinant. Salamini cites Bobbio (1979) as having said that the position of Gramsci in this regard doesn't put him out of Marxism as the basic tenets of Marxism are still maintained. Bobbio argued on the basis of Gramsci's concept of catharsis, "which indicates the passage from a mere economic moment to an ethico-political one. The term 'catharsis' can be employed to the passage from the purely economic (or egoistic-passional) to the ethico-political of the structure into the super-structure in the minds of men. This also means passage from objective to subjective and from necessity to freedom" (Salamini, 1981 : 143). It can be claimed from this argument that Gramsci did not approach the problematic of structure mechanistically as a relationship of cause and effect but as a means to an end. Gramsci doesn't approve of the dichotomist approach to the problem and conquest of hegemony by the proletariat, for him, is not only a transformation within the structure but is also the result of the structural process by which subaltern classes develop consciousness and acquire cultural autonomy.

As for the destruction of old and bourgeois institutions, Gramsci saw it as a vast process of historical modification of socio-political forces that support the economic status quo operate beneath the surface of formal institutions. As Carl

Bogg writes : 'The ideological erosion of the bourgeois order at every level - economic, political, cultural and social - would precede the initiation of direct frontal assaults on the state; this process would occur through the continuous and organic development of the subaltern or oppressed classes, which do not progress harmoniously but which surge ahead and suffer setbacks, come together and break up, more towards a variety of formations in response to specific influences and events' (Boggs, 1967 : 52). Gramsci, Boggs argued like Bobbio, gave first priority to this multi-dimensional transformation of civil society which should take place to secure the political hegemony for the subaltern classes much before the attainment of power.

It is implied from the above arguments that Gramsci's perspective is the conception of Marxist theory and Praxis as a new and integrated culture encompassing on all fronts to initiate and generate new historical possibilities and a system^{of}/new social and economic relations. As Carl Bogg puts it, the above task, 'involved above all the role of negating consciousness in shaping particular demands, in 'structuring' the revolutionary situation itself, in defining mass responses to issues and actions, and in setting the contours of future (post-revolutionary) development. Education - authentic political education - would be important, therefore in combating the old mystifying beliefs and diffusing a socialist counter hegemony among all potentially revolutionary subjects; but it would be an education rooted in praxis, closely bound up with

everyday political struggle' (Ibid : 53). Gramsci saw revolution not as a single event or a few events, particularly of seizing power and seizing political control but as a series of events taking place over a considerable period of time. This included events initiated for creating conditions for acquiring political hegemony and control over state power and those initiated for the growth and sustenance of revolutionary process.

The hegemony which the subaltern classes can establish without state power and before it is a limited one. It should represent most hegemonic forces available and will be better if the current ruling class hegemony is brought to a crisis.

It is in this line that Piccone foresees bright prospects for Gramscism saying that if in the history of Marxism the period from the Erfurt programme to 1914 is characterised as the period of Second International and periods between 1916 to 1920s, 1924 to 1950 and late 1950 to 1970s as the periods of Leninism, Stalinism and Maoism, the 1980s are likely to usher a new phase of Gramscism. This should sound more meaningful in the context of the international communist movement at the present juncture wherein 'both Russian and Chinese Communism have exhausted themselves and have found accommodation within a world order still under U.S. hegemony based on a new and not yet fully developed imperialist relations stronger than earlier versions and immune to traditional challenges' (Piccone, 1976 : 485) vide (Corrigan, 1979 : 93-94).

I argue here that Gramsci's approach to the problematic of base-superstructure or structure-superstructure relation is relevant to the understanding of the present day impasse in the international communist movement. Issues underlining the relevance of Gramsci's ideas are : a gloomy picture of revolutionary advance in spite of the development of objective conditions in the Western countries ; a nearly dogmatic approach to Marxism adopted by the revolutionary parties in both East and West particularly in India, wherein strategies and tactics of revolution are formulated in such stagist and economic-determinist schemes that much cannot be expected till the objective conditions ripen or there is some headway in the development of forces of production and capitalism. A shift in the overall perspectives in the light of the interpretations of Marxism by Gramsci which will imply assigning priority to the role of super-structural aspects is worth considering.

It is quite clear that Gramsci's basic propositions have important implications for the choice of revolutionary tactics and forms of struggle inside and outside the bourgeois representative institutions. Of particular importance is the question of priority between the political sphere constituting the state and its machinery and various institutions and the sphere of civil society wherein the broader issues of culture and religion and socio-economic organisation figure.

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The Indian context provides an example of a with multi-national and multicultural society wherein the state (polity) and civil society are in the process of getting organically related. Yet the process is very slow given the colonial background of political institutions and alien forms of political organisation and legitimisation. Although a frontal attack on the state apparatus and institutions would have been suggested by Gramsci, it is suggested that revolutionary praxis should also involve massive action with regard to the various shades of pre-feudal, feudal and bourgeois cultural patterns outside the state apparatus and representative institutions. Political activity of all sorts should be planned according to the native and regional forms of consciousness, organisation and revolt. Yet, the Parliamentary left in India bluntly puts aside the various religious groups in India as reactionary, thus not having to work from within these groups most of the times. On the other hand non-Parliamentary left uses the native forms consciousness and culture in mobilising the masses. Yet a dent is yet to be made from either side.⁹

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TROTSKY

By far the most controversial figure from within the Boleshevik tradition is Trotsky. His basic propositions, particularly, regarding international socialism permanent and uninterrupted revolution, and problems of socialism in one country sound more relevant today then ever.

As for the problematic of base-superstructure Trotsky gives priority to the base the productive forces and views the problematic in a world spectrum, thus implying that economic laws of world market operate across national economies. By implication the whole strategy of revolution and constitution of socialism should be planned within the scheme of world revolution.

Juxtaposing Lukascian proposition stressing the category of totality in Marxist method, and Trotskyite revolutionary theory in which capitalism and class struggle are considered as a world process Lowy quotes Trotsky : 'Binding all countries together with it's mode of production and its commerce, capitalism has converted the whole world into a single economic and political organism ... This immediately gives the events now unfolding an international character and opens a wide horizon. The political emancipation of Russia led by the working class will make it the initiator of the liquidation of world capitalism, for history has created all the objective conditions' (Trotsky, Preface to Lassalle, Rech Perod Sudom Prisyanykh, St. Petersburg, 1905, p.27). Trotsky could pose the problem in this way so as to transcend the traditional perspective that saw the socialist revolutionary ripeness of Russian exclusively in terms of national economic determinism.

The political corollary of Trotsky's application of the base-superstructure problematic to his concept of revolution as a world process is the concept of permanent and uninterupt-

ed revolution. For him seizure of power and revolution are a part of the superstructure and highest development in individual countries is possible through carrying production, exchange and marketing of goods and services on an international level. Keeping this overarching perspective in mind it can be said that the prospects of sustaining revolution in a country or a few countries are linked with the prospects of world revolution or at least a speedy extension of revolution from countries where it has succeeded to other countries.

Although Trotsky gave more importance to productive forces and technology for socialist advance to take place, he considered seizure of political power and establishing bases for proletarian hegemony very much a subjective, organisational and superstructural aspect.

Trotsky assigned an active role to state and its institutions in the achievement and sustenance of revolution. According to him "the state is not an end in itself. It is only a machine in the hands of the dominating social forces ... is a tremendous means for organising disorganising and reorganising social relations. It can be a powerful lever for revolution or a tool for organised stagnation, depending upon the hands that control it" (Trotsky, 1906 : 194) vide (Corrcgan, 1978:71).

Trotsky viewed the state and its institutions as the principal agency of both political and productive transformation and the main instrument of revolutionising the masses.

But all political activity including revolution is a part of superstructure. In Russia, for example, Trotsky pointed to the principal contradiction between technological backwardness and the proletarian hegemony and maintained that because of this contradiction was not resolved the proletarian dictatorship degenerated into bureaucratic dictatorship. The failure of some theoreticians like Plekhanov to see social, political and ideological factors as mediating agencies in the development of productive forces and consider revolution as a permanent phenomenon led Trotsky to break with economism.

As Lowy clarified : "Trotsky explicitly rejected the economism (the tendency to reduce in a non-mediated and one-sided fashion, all social, political and ideological contradictions to the economic structure) which was one of the hall marks of the Plekhanovian interpretation of Marxism. Indeed Trotsky's break with economism was one of the decisive steps towards the theory of permanent revolution" (Lowy, 1981 : 49). Further, Lowy quoting from Trotsky's Results and Prospects says "To imagine that the dictatorship of the Proletariat is in some way automatically dependent on the technical development and resources of a country is a prejudice of economic materialism simplified to absurdity. This point of view has nothing in common with Marxism" (Lowy, 1981 : 49).

Of particular importance in this regard is his rejection of the concept of stagist revolution. In essence stagist revolution, which divides the process of revolution into stages

i.e. bourgeois democratic and socialist in accordance with the development of forces of production, has implication for formulation of issues for mobilization, timing of revolution, and, evolving the forms of struggles.

Further, Trotsky's analysis of the Marxist problematic of base-superstructure is quite relevant to the problems faced by many communist parties who have evolved their perspectives and formulated strategies and tactics according to the scheme of stagist revolution. Trotsky claims that he is within the confines of Leninism in arguing for a permanent uninterrupted revolution in terms of the requirements of seizure of power irrespective of the stage of development of productive forces, presuming thereby that stages of development are more relevant to the socialist reconstruction rather than to the formulation of a programme for seizure of power by the proletariat and establishing proletarian hegemony. Trotsky's concern seems to be that any tight link-up between stages of development and seizure of power will entail missing of opportunities. When the crisis in political systems occur and revolutionary situation and power vacuums exist but the communist parties do not seize the opportunity, because of their being bound up in a stagist scheme.

It is in this line Lowy in his politics of Combined and Uneven Development : Theory of Permanent Revolution, analyses the basic propositions of Trotsky in relation to the world communist movement. Referring particularly, to the nature of

the Chinese, Yugoslav, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions and the record of the development of capitalism in countries like Mexico, Egypt, India and Turkey, he establishes the continuing relevance of Trotsky's concepts for understanding the problems of international communist movement in all its dimensions.

MAO TSE TUNG

Mao Tse Tung, the pioneer of the Chinese revolution, comes next to Gramsci in terms of making innovations in the application of base-superstructure relations to concrete situations. At the risk of a bit of simplification I would argue that we find a sort of mutual confirmation of the theoretical elaborations of Marxian base-superstructure relation with a greater stress on superstructure aspects by Gramsci and practical innovations in by Mao. Mao's innovations lie in breaking the traditional economistic understanding of the base-structure in the process of class struggles both in pre-liberation and post-liberation China (Corrigan, 1978 : 10). Mao's innovative propositions particularly 'cultural revolution' in all its ramifications, are significant illustrations of Gramsci's concepts.

The central aspect of Mao's theoretical and practical stance is his political epistemology. As Corrigan writes : "If correct ideas come from social practice, it is wrong to see a correct theory (a collection of strategic ideas) as more universal than more correct social practice. Moreover, theory

cannot deny the possibility of error. The notion of error free theory is co-extensive with bourgeois era, finding its social image in the work of academic commentators and intellectual critics".

His precepts 'Politics must take precedence over economics, from the masses to the masses', or 'the mass line', 'never forget the class struggle', and many others undoubtedly make him a theoretician of superstructure. In his scheme of revolution and socialist construction, ideology and cultural revolution are prime factors provided they are not separated from simultaneous revolutionisation of the forces of production. This approach to the problematic of forces of production and relation of production was formulated by Mao out of his insights into the activity of peasant associations during his investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan (March, 1927) and developed further in his On Contradictions. In the following quote we see his staunch opposition to mechanistic materialist conception:

"True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and superstructures in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role" (Mao, On Contradictions, S.W. 1 : p.136 vide Corrigan, 1978 : 31).

His stress on reliance on masses, to be good at learning from their customs, traditions and how they think and act to enable oneself to change and to reorientate them, and his exhortation : 'liberate philosophy from the confines of the philosophers' lecture rooms and textbooks and turn it into a sharp weapon in the hands of the masses, are consistently Marxist. Commenting on Mao's ideas that practice is the only source of right knowledge, Corrigan cites Mao as follows:

"In all practical work our party, all correct leadership is necessarily from the masses to the masses. This means take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrates them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain those ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action ... And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge" (Corrigan, 1978 : 24).

We find a great deal in Mao's theoretical elaboration of Marxism in the light of his political praxis in China that has implications for strategy and tactics of class struggle and revolution in Third World countries particularly India. However, one thing must be clarified. Any simple transposition of Mao's ideas from China to any ^{other country} ~~is~~ is unwarranted. Take for example the case of India. Historically China was dominated by many

imperialist countries i.e. Japan, Germany, Britain, France and the U.S.A. It was a concubine of all these imperialist powers. These were contradictions among all those powers and no power had serious vested interest in China. Unlike in India, no particular colonial power could have established its domination exclusively and create politico-economic structures of any sort. As such the nature of foreign domination in China resulted in disunity, disruption and stagnation in socio-economic life, thus creating a revolutionary situation inside the country.

Protagonists of Mao's strategy and tactics in India have been right to the extent that they tried to formulate a new strategy and tactics for Indian revolution and gave a new dimension to the Indian communist movement which was otherwise steeped in the parliamentary path and 'parliamentary cretinism'. Yet, it can fairly be said that formulation of a correct line is not enough; what is more important is mobilizing the mass support from within the existing parties and from new sections of the people, based on the forms of struggle that may be historically relevant to Indian conditions, particularly the administrative and representative institutions which though inducted from outside, have taken strong roots and have acquired native character over a period of time. On the one hand, bourgeoisie, after independence has developed serious stakes in not allowing them to go revolutionary. On the other, the people have developed illusions about them. Although these illusions are ill founded it is a big task to make the oppressed classes think and act towards an alternative. It is, perhaps this aspect of

the Indian situation that led to a shift in the strategies and tactics of the non-parliamentary left in India, particularly the modification of their attitude to the utilisation of bourgeois representative institutions.

MARXIST REVOLUTIONARY THEORY AND PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

In every class society there exists a progressive class representing the progressive economic laws of the society and a reactionary class against whose existence and survival these progressive laws act. The progressive class propagates economic institutions and political ideas which ensure victory in its struggle against the reactionary forces and establishes such institutions that embody the progressive ideas to consolidate its power. This does not mean that all the views and institutions that exist prior to its victory are abandoned altogether. On the contrary, the peculiar form which the progressive ideas and institutions are given is generally derived from previously existing forms but their content arises from and reflects the conditions of existence and interests of the particular class at a given time. The concepts of monarchy, aristocracy and democratic republic and the related representative institutions were there in the epoch of slavery in countries like Greece and Rome. But as Lenin wrote, "Whether a monarchy was instituted or a republic it was a monarchy or a republic of the slave owners. All rights were enjoyed by them while the slave was a chattel in the eyes of law, slave owning republics different in their internal organisation. There were aristocratic republic and democratic republics. In an aristocratic

republic only a small number of privileged persons took part but every-body meant only the slave owners, that is everybody except the slaves !----" (Lenin, 1979, C.W. Vol.29, p.480). Throughout the feudal epoch also the state and its institutions varied from monarchy to democratic republic but always the feudal lord was regarded as the ruler and his was the final say in regard to law, justice and their execution. But in practice, although the conditions of serfs in feudalism differed very little from those of slaves in slave-owning society, the progressive role of the feudal values and institutions opened a wider road for the emancipation of serfs.

Bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliaments which evolved in the process of struggle between feudalism and the emerging capitalist class had played a positive role in the consolidation and strengthening of the bourgeois regimes. In the process of their struggles against feudalism the capitalist class gave the slogan of liberty and equality and right to property for all, which attracted into its fold the serfs because they hoped to become the owners of the land which they cultivated on behalf of feudal owners.

In this way Marxists pay due regard to the political and economic achievements of the bourgeois epoch. They try to see where bourgeois democracy stands in the history of social development and human civilization and how it is conditional for proletarian democracy. They feel that they can learn from the success of bourgeoisie in establishing proletarian power.

Thus the positive achievement of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliaments provide the Marxists with a model and a methodology for fulfilling their proletarian tasks.

Detailing how and why the bourgeois becomes reactionary and goes back on its ideals and promises and suppresses the class struggle is not the purpose of this paper. It will suffice to say that the conquest of power by the bourgeoisie does not end the exploitation of the direct producers by the non-producers but puts it on a different footing. As Blackburn writes, "the crucial feature of the labour process under developed capitalism is that surplus value can be pumped out of the direct producer without using physical coercion by the immediate exploiter. This leads to an increasing separation of the process of organisation of production from the organisation of violence or to put it in other terms of economics from politics" (Blackburn, 1977 : 4).

Blackburn is here talking in terms of the separation of the state from civil society in the wake of bourgeois revolution as depicted by Marx in his early writings particularly in the The Jewish Question . The transformation of under feudalism wherein state and civil society were a single organized entity, to capitalism had abolished the political character of civil society, separating the state from it, thus endowing the citizen with a double character.

In the context of bourgeois society in the political realm of the state, the citizen enjoys freedom, liberty and equality irrespective of both rank education and wealth, participating equally in popular sovereignty. As a member of the civil society he, as a man, has the right to private property, religion, education and occupation. Man as a member of civil society is the real living individual and in the state he is the imaginary member of a fictitious sovereignty. This separation on the one hand emancipates man politically while on the other hand it leaves him in the midst of unequal competition among individuals with distinctions. This kind of emancipation being partial, "only when real individual man resumes the abstract citizen into himself and as an individual man has become a species being in this empirical life, his individual work and his individual relationships, only when man has recognised and organised his forces proper (own forces) as social forces so that social force is no longer separated from him in the form of political force, only then will human emancipation be completed" (Marx Early Writings (1975 : 232) vide Mukherjee, 1981: 219).

However, the main concern here is with the political manoeuvres and manipulations that the bourgeoisie indulge in to defend itself from the resistance of the proletariat by force, persuasion, and deception and creating illusions. Some relevant questions are : whether all the ideas and institutions it has established, particularly universal suffrage, parliamentary

institutions, rule of law and independent judiciary all turn reactionary and become politically and historically obsolete? Can the workers and peasants build up a base for themselves within the framework of this network for their own ends till it is disbanded altogether? Should they have an altogether different outlook towards the relatively autonomous aspects of bourgeois society like political rights, parliament, freedom of press, assembly and association etc., which the bourgeoisie still upholds for legitimacy as distinguished from the highly alienated executive and other extra-parliamentary state apparatus and over-inflated army and intelligence on which the bourgeoisie really relies for its survival?

MARX AND ENGELS

The analysis of the functioning of the bourgeoisie state and bourgeois parliaments, has been the starting point for Marx, Engels and all Marxists for exploring the course of action open to the proletariat. Marx called the democratic representative state as the culmination of bourgeois political power. Although he discussed the nature and specific features of bourgeois state in The Communist Manifesto, its analysis in economic terms or in terms of relations of production appears in The Capital. The crucial questions in this context examined by Marx are : How a change in the relations of production changes the nature of exploitation from coercion of the direct producers in the slave and feudal societies to a subtle and deceptive appropriation of surplus labour in the bourgeois

society where the labourers submit voluntarily to exploitation; how the various welfare activities not only direct the attention of the people from the monopoly of the state in violence and coercion but also make the state the arbitor and guarantor of the social formation.¹⁰ Identifying the emergence of the state with the evolution of surplus value Marx and Engles explained how a unitary and stable state emerged after the bourgeois revolution and how the modern police and armed forces justified the collection of heavy public taxes although the essential function of monopolised violence is revealed only in times of crises due to civil war, revolution etc.

Many of Marx's ideas on the constitutional and institutional aspects of the bourgeois state appear in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte and Class Struggles in France. He characterised constitutional republic as the dictatorship of the united exploiters who unite around it for protection and liberty from encroachment by the exploited. Rights and liberties in such a constitution are always provided with strings and limitations so much so that they can be enjoyed only by the possessing classes and each provision contains its own anti-thesis : for instance upper and lower houses of the legislature lead to 'freedom in general phrase and abolition of freedom in marginal note'. Thus although formal sovereignty rests in the constitution itself, the physical guarantor of each and every provision is the executive and the repressive power of the state.

This aspect of Marx's analysis can be applied, with modifications, to any constitution in a bourgeois state including the ones in the ex-colonial societies. It is not surprising that the Britishers provided such a constitution for the Indian dominion through various acts particularly the Government of India Act, 1935 which, as one nationalist commented, gave rights with the right hand and took them away with the left.

LENIN

By far the most authoritative analysis of the bourgeois State that has been made after Marx and Engels is that of Lenin in 'The State and Revolution', 'The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky' and 'Thesis on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat'. Lenin's analysis takes into account the experiences of The Paris Commune, various trends in the Second International and the October Revolution in Russia.

Why the exploitation of labour by capital is ensured and the omnipotence of wealth goes well with a representative state in any form of government has been explained by Lenin as follows:

"The reason why the omnipotence of wealth is more certain in a democratic republic is that it does not depend on individual defects in the political machinery or on the political shell of capitalism and therefore once capital has gained possession of this very best shell It establishes its power securely, so firmly, that no change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois democratic republic can shake it" (Lenin, 1972 : 15).

According to Lenin the bourgeois democratic institutions, whatever be their form, only legitimise the exploitation while the oppressed and exploited are allowed, once in every few years, the opportunity to choose which particular representative of the oppressing class shall represent them and oppress them in parliament. Wealth exercises its power indirectly through the corruption of the officials and alliance with the stock exchange and by way of controlling various other fields of activity like press, communication etc. As he writes "capital manifests its power in one way where one form exists; and in another way where another form exists - but essentially the power is in the hands of the capital, whether there are voting qualifications or some other rights or not, or whether the republic is democratic or not - in fact the more democratic it is the cruder and more cynical is the rule of capitalism -- once the capital exists it dominates the whole society, and no democratic republic and franchise can change its nature" (Lenin, 1965 : CW, 485-86).

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that all electoral reforms, or constitutional amendments that have taken place in regard to forms of government in various bourgeois constitutions including the Third World countries in the last few decades conform to what Lenin has said. This means, by implication that even those reforms pioneered by the left parties, who come to power by electoral means and want to change the social structure in favour of social revolution within a bour-

geois framework, will not be of any use, unless the domination of capital is not dealt with by extra-constitutional and extra-parliamentary means.

Lenin discusses in his "Theses on Bourgeois Democracy" and the "Dictatorship of the proletariat (1919)" how the possessing classes control the various activities that are known to be the attributes of bourgeois democracy i.e. freedom of press and assembly, rule of law and equal justice for all by an independent judiciary. Although the bourgeoisie advances the slogan of democracy, especially genuine, non-class democracy and appeals to the workers to adopt these appeals and slogans it only helps it to cover the naked suppression of democratic rights by coercion and the logic of capitalist relations of production. Lenin shows how the above elements of democracy in general are empty.

In the bourgeois state only the possessing classes have the means and leisure to engage in politics and exercise the right of assembly, the press is owned and run by the rich; the biggest stocks of paper are controlled by the rich and publishing houses, editors and writers are at their disposal, thus making the bourgeois democratic rights an illusion for the non-possessing classes. The same is also true about the right to justice and rule of law as bourgeois jurisprudence protecting man's innate rights go well with the exploitation of labour by capital. Above all stands the army and the reserve police which are alienated from the common people but are always at

the disposal of the bourgeoisie for applying violence and force in accordance with bourgeois legality and bourgeois liberal constitution.

Lenin thus argues that what some socialists do not understand is that whenever the class struggle intensifies or a civil war takes place there is no alternative to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or dictatorship of the proletariat and that without establishing the dictatorship of proletariat it is not possible to deprive capital of all these advantages and privileges. Another theoretical error on the part of the socialists according to him is that ever since the concept of democracy appeared its content has changed in accordance with changing ruling classes who applied it in different ways at different times. In his words, "It would be sheer non-sense to think that the most profound revolution in human history, the first case in the world of power being transferred from the exploiting minority to the exploited majority, could take place within the time-worn framework of the old, bourgeois, parliamentary democracy, without drastic changes, without the creation of new forms of democracy, new institutions that embody the conditions for applying democracy" (Lenin, 1966 : 475).

ROSA LUXEMBURG

Rosa Luxemburg discussed the nature of bourgeois legality, the violence embodied in the bourgeois state, and problems and prospects of bourgeois society in 'Gesammelte Werke IV'. Her

views in this regard, though controversial, are very useful in understanding the developments in the capitalist state i.e. its sustenance, survival and crises. About bourgeois legality and bourgeois violence she said:

"What presents itself to us as bourgeois legality is nothing but violence of the ruling class, a violence raised to an obligatory norm from the outset once the individual acts of violence have been raised in this way to an obligatory norm, then the process may be reflected in the mind of the bourgeois jurist (and no less in the mind of the socialist opportunist) not as it really is, but upside down : the 'Legal order' appears as an independent creation of abstract justice, and the coercive violence of the state as a mere consequence, a mere 'sanctioning of the law. In reality, the truth is exactly the opposite : bourgeois legality (and parliamentarism as legality in the process of development) is itself only a particular social form expressing the political violence of the bourgeoisie, a violence which has grown up out of the given economic base".¹¹

Her views in regard to bourgeois legality the attitude of the violence are useful in making the working class aware of the fact that violence is the basis of bourgeois legality all the times, peace, civil war and crises. The views also dispel their false perception of violence and a feeling of guilt which pulls it back from waging violent struggles against the bourgeois state.

About the prospects of bourgeois democracy and capitalist state Luxemburg thought that the bourgeoisie still find the mechanisms of universal suffrage and other representative institutions as its instruments of legitimation and stabilization. The bourgeoisie still dominates the working class by consent, whether that consent is misleading or manipulated. But it does this job not by revealing the essential nature of the bourgeois system to the masses but by concealing it subtly and deceptively, notwithstanding the fact that bourgeois institutions have lost their historical function even from the bourgeois point of view. She, along with Trotsky, pointed out that the reactionary nature of the bourgeois system is concealed by a network of political superstructure i.e. elections, parliamentary debate, committee system and even some elements of proletarian democracy i.e. trade unions, workers parties and workers participation in the management of the factories, as much as the wage form conceals the exploitation of labour by capital. Further, in the advanced capitalist countries the bourgeoisie leans more and more in the support of the working class and attracts them by reforms. The working class is also diverted by reformist parties like the Labour Party in Britain and even the conservatives who also initiate reforms pragmatically to pacify the workers. An interesting thing, however, is what reform measures put forward by socialist or labour reformists serve as a better safeguard for bourgeois institutions than those put forward by the conservative parties whose nature is clearly exposed to the workers. Thus the capitalist

class has been using bourgeois democracy and reformist movements of the left like that of the Labour Party effectively¹² in Britain to arrest the revolutionary progress which has been haunting it for over a century (Norman Geras, 1977 : 310-312 Passim).

The experience of Chile and Indonesia illustrates that when the working class leadership does not yield and goes ahead with its revolutionary programme, the bourgeoisie will react in such a manner that it gets the movement smashed physically and ideologically (Miliband, 1973; Murthy, 1975; Namboodripad, 1983).

I have discussed in the preceding pages how political ideas and institutions originate and what active and progressive role they play in social development and social revolution; how they can be used for reactionary or reformatory purposes wherein they become embodiments of counter revolution instead of its carriers. As discussed above it is obligatory on the part of Marxists to examine the political institutions in a dialectical historical perspective for evolving any policy in relation to them. The reason is that some Marxists blur the distinction between some bourgeois democracies and their institutions and authoritarian regimes out of the fear that to do otherwise would make more difficult an intransigent critique of the class limitations and inherent shortcomings of bourgeois democracy, and by the fear that it would conceal the fact that bourgeois democracy can be turned with the assent and

encouragement of ruling classes into authoritarian and fascist regimes. Then comes the need to see the process of development of class consciousness and class struggle also from a historical dialectical perspective such as distinguishing the consciousness of the advanced cadres and that of the workers and peasants, and various kinds of groups within a class in various historical contexts. History of the proletarian movements the world over has brought more problems and created new situations particularly such as failure of revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries and its success in the backward countries like China and Vietnam have made the Marxists modify the premises and propositions made by Marx and Engels. By far the most controversial problem in this regard is the nature of success of revolution in Russia and countries led by it (Bettelheim, 1974, 78). Interestingly the Chinese Revolution has become an issue of controversy on more or less the same lines. The limitations of Chinese Revolution which were focussed in classical Marxist debates particularly by Trotskyites (Beams, 1978 : 7-22) have now become the bone of contention in the debate among academicians concerned with socialist revolution particularly Charles Bettelheim and Fillix Green. Surprisingly many revolutionary groups in India which have emulated the revolutionary strategy of Mao have also come forward with criticisms of the policies of the new leadership in China.

One of the problems which the Communist face, in addition to the unending controversy at the theoretical level mentioned above, is how far bourgeois ideas and institutions can be uti-

lized for mobilising and preparing the working class and other oppressed classes both to expose the hollowness of these institutions and to drive home the necessity of waging a class struggle outside them by attacking their material foundation. The crucial thing is unless the oppressed classes do not clear off the illusions about the efficacy of the lower forms of struggle they cannot see the necessity of the higher forms of struggle. It is not enough if the conscious and leading cadre of the proletarian party are thoroughly convinced as to how obsolete the bourgeois institutions have become historically; it is the masses, who actually conduct the act of destroying the old institutions about which they have illusions, must be thoroughly convinced of that in the process of their daily life. Parliamentarism, though based on bourgeois democracy, is one of the tactics that can be used to educate the oppressed class towards that consciousness, notwithstanding the controversy over the continuous use of this tactic.

In their comprehensive revolutionary programme with the ultimate objective of winning political power, the communists combine legal and illegal work, outside and inside the Parliament in a revolutionary way, subserving their programme executed independently. Whatever tactics they evolve, depend on the objective factors in the society and the level of consciousness - the subjective factor - of the people in a given situation. That is, the characterisation of the nature of the state, the stage of economic development and class formation, the alliance of class forces and the cultural ethos together become a primary

question and formulation of tactics accordingly become secondary. Any disregard of this may result in adventurism which eventually leads to disillusionment.

Yet this issue has not been free from controversy in the communist movement the world over and in India where a broad based participation in parliament and other representative institutions at federal, state and local levels has become possible since the fifties. But what is important in the study of the controversy is that the tactics such as participation in bourgeois parliaments and reactionary trade unions should be judged in terms of the overall theory of different programmes of the communist parties and not in isolation. Tactics change from time to time and situation to situation and it is not un-Marxian if tactics go wrong, although the formulation of a wrong theory has far reaching consequences. A comprehensive treatment of the programmes should enable one to see whether a programme heightens the consciousness of the people and sharpens the class struggle resulting in the development of a revolutionary situation or vice-versa.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper has been to attempt at evolving a broad framework for reviewing the problems and prospects of communist parties working within the framework of bourgeois-liberal and bourgeois-democratic societies for achieving socialist revolution in various countries. The specific objective is to understand the problems which the left parties in

India are facing in advancing the communist movement and class struggle and heightening the revolutionary consciousness of the various oppressed classes by initiating struggles on various fronts.

I have discussed the Marxist approach to the understanding of ideas and institutions particularly political ideas and institutions, with particular reference to the controversy about the base-superstructure relationship. The main intention here has been to come to grips with the objective situation, relations of production, existence of various classes, the class conflict and possibilities of advancing the class struggle in a particular historical context in terms of the debate among the major Marxist theoreticians particularly Engels, Lenin, Plekanov, Trotsky, Gramsci and Luxemburg and academicians like C. Wright Mills, Barry Hindess and McLellan. While Engels, Lenin and Plekanov found no basic problem with the main proposition of Marx, Gramsci and Carl Boggs have been critical of the inadequacies of the Marxist problematic of base - superstructure and Marx's emphasis on economic factors in social development. Similarly academicians like C. Wright Mills accepted the basic propositions of Marx and Engels for the purposes of studying a specific and objective situation and formulating revolutionary programmes while Barry Hindess contended that the imagery of base-superstructure of Marx and economic determination of Marx will be inadequate for application to practical problems of alliances of class forces, forms of struggles, parti-

cularly in countries having parliamentary forms of government. I argue here that the points raised by Hindess is relevant to the growing complexity of classes and increasing problems of specific sections like students and women in most of the present day societies. May be, the failures of some communist parties have to be understood in terms of their application of the Marxist base-superstructure analysis in a technical fashion.

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1. The reference is to the experiment of the parliamentary road to socialism like that under the leadership of Salvador Allende in Chile which was overthrown in a coup and also that of the path taken by the CPI in India in particular and the Khrushchev line adopted by various parties the world over in general. Included in this category are the Communist Parties of Italy, France and Spain who have dropped dictatorship of the proletariat from their programmes and have adopted, as they claim, the concepts of hegemony, pluralism and multi-party system of Gramsci although Gramsci's hegemony has nothing to do with Communist pluralism. For further reference in this regard see Paolo Filo Della Terre, et. al., 1979 : 10-23.
2. The various shades of the New Left in France, Britain and Latin America and also some of the extremist groups in India like Central Organising Committee (COC), OCCR, UCCRI(ML) particularly before 1977 and groups which are continuing to boycott elections.
3. Parties in this category are, CPI (ML), UCCRI (ML) in India. The CPI (ML) participated in Assembly elections in 1977 and in 1981. For further information see Mukherjee (1983) where the author has discussed the shift in the strategy and tactics of these parties after the elections of 1977. See also C.P. Reddy, Attitude Towards Opposition Bourgeois Parties and Bourgeois Election Alliances : Lessons from Past History of the International Communist Movement, Central Committee : CPI (ML), 1982.
4. Either for reasons of their theories and strategies or for reasons of tactics and practice Allendie's line of peaceful and parliamentary path to socialism in Chile and that of CPI in India which is not rigid about peaceful or violent or revolu-

tionary path and CPI (M) which, for the present, concentrates on participation in the assemblies and parliament and formation of governments within the bourgeois framework, the practices of these parties have not resulted in revolutionary strides. On the other hand the various shades of New Left - The New Left influenced by the writings of Franz Fanon in Sweden, and those influenced by Jean Paul Sartre and Herbert Marcuse, the various student movements in Latin American countries like Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Columbia and Mexico in 1966, the student movement which evolved into Socialistische Deutsche Student Bond (SDS), the Maoist movement under the leadership of Mori and Miss Nagata in Japan and the very long and protracted movement in Brazil under Carlos Marighella, Che Guevara and Regis Debray ever since 1952, have dwindled like dodos. The Maoist movement in India, in spite of substantial gains, is yet to consolidate as a nation wide and popular phenomenon and to acquire due legitimacy. For further reference in this regard, see Jha (1982).

Among the extremists the crux of the issue is whether to take part in the parliaments in a limited way or to totally boycott them. Among those who want to concentrate on the struggles within the parliamentary arena which may have to be supplemented by outside struggles, the issue is whether to influence and mould the policies of the government so as to create favourable circumstances - both the changes in the socio-economic structure such as relations of property and production and broad based development of national capitalism - or to use the participation in elections as a means of disseminating socialist ideas and to impart training in class struggles and also to demonstrate popular support to the communist movement.

5. Lenin, on and of, cautioned for such a tendency. For him, the question of methods and forms of struggle must be investigated and decided primarily from a historical view point. A neglect of this will only undermine the theoretical foundation of dialectical materialism and dialectics of class struggle. The primary and secondary or supplementary methods of struggle should vary according to the stage of economic evolution and the specific political economic, cultural, social and other considerations. To say something decidedly regarding any method of struggle without reference to the concrete circumstances at the given stage of development will be abandoning Marxism altogether (Lenin, CW, Vol. X : 85-87).

6. Although the superstructure is an extremely complex social formation and many factors, which interact, influence its actual development and its varying forms in every period, "What else does the history of ideas prove than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed", Marx and Engels (1948, Chapter-2). Society and the form of institutions are influenced by the changes in techniques of production, scientific discoveries

but the nature of the dominant views and institutions depends on the type of economic structure and "the ways in which changes in techniques and scientific discovery receive expression in the views and institutions of society always depends upon the type of production relations". Thus techniques of production remain same in capitalist and socialist relations of production although laws and social and political institutions change (Cornforth, Vol. 2 : P.81; Kenstantinov, 1954, 30, 34).

7. See Adorasky (1949 : 29-31), who says "Slavery is abominable But slavery at a given phase of historical development of humanity was progressive in the remotest past, at a given level of development of productive forces". "When enemies instead of being killed were turned into slaves and their labour power was thus preserved and put to use", and compared with the serf system, capitalism was beneficial as it, to a certain extent, freed the toilers and placed them in favourable condition for their development and their class struggle for emancipation. Thus in the case of political ideas and institutions in pre-revolutionary Russia, for the proletariat bourgeois democracy was, of course, preferable to a tsarist autocracy.

8. Clarifying the point Engels wrote : we regard economic conditions (the material factor) as the factor which ultimately conditions historical development --- political judicial, philosophical, religious literary, artistic etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic basis. It is not that the economic condition is the cause and alone active, while everything else is only a passive effect. There is, rather interaction on the basis of economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself (Engels, Letter to H. Starkenburg, January 25, 1894).

9. An attempt in line with Gramsci's approach has been made to study the problems which the Indian Peasantry faced from the leadership of the middle and rich peasantry in securing organisational autonomy and cultural hegemony in their struggle against the indigenous vested interests and colonial domination, see (Guha, 1982) and also (Arnold, 1984).

10. In a capitalist society the mechanism of value, market and the rate of profit operate in an opeque and mysterious fashion on a global scale bringing vast population into contact with each other. However, this fundamental characteristic of economic relations in capitalist society is partly concealed by an ideology which insists on a few simple direct relationships that between the workers and the boss, between the buyer and the seller, one group of workers and another in competition with them. But in each case the truth about such relationships can only be unravelled by reference to the context as a whole.

By contrast, the state apparatus is said to be governed by abstract principles - the rule of law, constitutional formulae, the mechanisms of popular representation. In reality the state constitutes a sphere of compressed and direct authority within a given territory, constituted by chains of command, orders, police patrols, prison bars frontier guards. It is because the state is an instrument of this sort that it brings all social classes into direct relations with one another (Blackburn, 1977 : 43).

11. Rosa Luxemburg, *Gessmmele Works IV Berlin, 1928* vide Paul Frolich (1972 : 68-69), Etienne Balibar writes in the same tone in his On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (Balibar, 1977 : 66-76).

12. Tom Nairn, *Presenting a profile of the Labour Party in Britain* said that because of its programmatic weaknesses like isolating militant communists in the labour movement on the one hand and the absorbing capacity of the bourgeois order on the other the labour party was enfeebled to the point of revolutionary impotency (Tom Nairn, 1977) and the argument, throughout, echos only what Rosa Luxemburg said.

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